



Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know

Participant Guide



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Welcome

Welcome to this TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) training event. We are excited that you will be joining us today for *Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know*, and we look forward to helping you to get as much out of this time as possible.

Your classroom today is not very large, 125 or fewer students from as many as 40 different locations across the NPS. We purposely keep the class size small to assure that if you have a question, there is time to get it answered. Don't hesitate to ask—if you have a question, there are probably several others in the class who have the same question—you might as well be the one to ask! It is our goal that you leave class today with no unanswered questions.

How To Interact with the Instructor

We encourage you to ask questions and share your comments with the instructors throughout this TELNPS course.

If you were physically in the classroom with the instructor, you would raise your hand to let her/him know you had a question or comment. Then you would wait for the instructor to recognize you and ask for your question. We are all familiar with that “protocol” for asking questions or making comments.

With TELNPS courses there is also a “protocol” to follow to ensure that you can easily ask questions and others can participate as well. It may seem a little strange at first asking a question of a TV monitor. Remember, it is the instructor you are interacting with and not the

monitor. As you ask more questions and participate in more TELNPS courses, you will soon be focusing only on the content of your question and not the equipment you are using to ask it.

As part of the TEL station equipment at your location, there are several push-to-talk microphones. Depending on the number of students at your location, you may have one directly in front of you or you may be sharing one with other students at your table.

When you have a question, press and hold down the push-to-talk button, maintaining a distance of 12-18 inches, and say,

“Excuse me [instructor’s first name], this is [your first name]

at [your location]. I have a question (or I have a comment).”

Then release the push-to-talk button. This is important.

Until you release the button, you will not be able to hear the instructor.

The instructor will acknowledge you and then ask for your question or comment. Stating your name and location not only helps the instructor, but also helps other students who are participating at different locations to get to know their classmates.



Course Overview

Why a *Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know* program?

Position descriptions are more than just a list of duties. They are used for many purposes: first, to review prior to applying for a position and throughout an employee's tenure; second, to define the employee's duties in the workplace and justify his or her salary; and third, to determine awards and even promotions. It's not hard to see that how a PD describes the nature of a job will have a great impact on each of these elements. We're here today to talk about some of the basic legal requirements, and to show how YOU can write PDs that accurately reflect your present needs and prepare for the future growth of your park or office.

Target Audience

Any NPS employee with supervisory responsibilities, or who serves as an advisor to supervisors, such as an HR Specialist. This course has been approved to count 2.5 hours toward the mandated NPS annual 40-hour supervisory training requirement.

Program Timing

Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know is a 2.5-hour TELNPS course.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and legality of a position description (PD)
- Know how to develop and write a PD
- Understand the role of position management in developing PDs
- Explain the purpose of the OF-8
- Use established PDs correctly
- Explain to your employees procedures for filing appeals

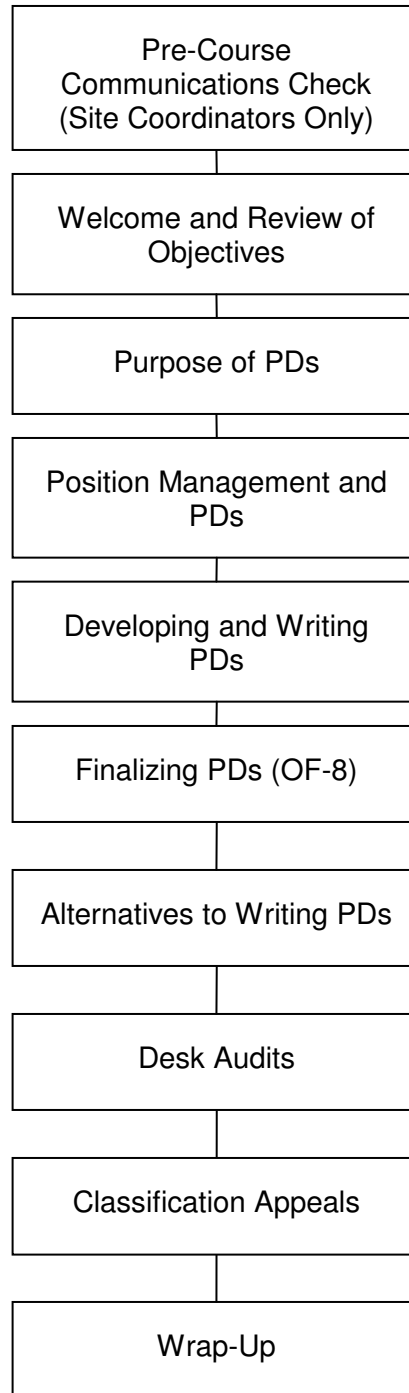
Leadership Competencies

- Results Driven: Accountability, Problem-Solving, Technical Credibility
- Business Acumen: Human Resources Management
- Leading People: Vision
- Leading Change: Strategic Thinking

Site Point-of-Contact Responsibilities

The TEL Station Site Point-of-Contact must reserve the training room, notify employees that the park will be participating in this TEL training event, make sure the Participant Guide is available to students, set up the TEL Station on the day of the training, make sure students sign in on the Student Roster form, and finalize the roster in My Learning Manager.

Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know Course Map



Purpose of a Position Description

Exercise: Top 10 Questions

What do you think are some of the most common questions supervisors ask about PDs?

What is a “Position Description”?

A position description is the official record of duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or group of positions by management in order to accomplish a specific job.

Exercise: Why Are PDs Important?

At your site, come up with at least 2 reasons why you think PDs are important.

Reasons We Have PDs (Office of Personnel Management)

1. Creating _____ of duties and responsibilities.
2. Serving as _____ for paying incumbent.
3. Providing _____ information (KSAs).
4. _____ performance standards.
5. Setting _____ requirements.
6. Documenting duties for _____.
7. Determining _____ costs for personnel.
8. Improving _____ methods.
9. Organizing and assigning _____.

Position Management and PDs

When Should You Write a New PD?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3 Key Players in Developing a PD

Supervisors/Managers

- Determine the duties and responsibilities of each position
- Write the position description
- Add, remove, or change assignments
- Ensure that PD is current, adequate, and accurate
- Initiate classification actions

Employees

- Perform assigned duties
- Notify supervisor when duties change and become regular and recurring
- May write or help write updated description

Classifiers

- Provide technical advice on assigning duties and developing PDs
- Validate PDs
- Help managers carry out legal and personnel responsibilities

Questions To Ask Yourself Before Writing a PD

1. Is the position necessary?
2. Is the FTE authorized? If not, how will I fund the position?
3. Can the position be structured differently?
4. Does the position fit into the work area or park?
5. Does the position serve employee needs?

GS and WG

Position Descriptions are based upon the 2 types of pay systems:

General Schedule (GS): Involves professional (requiring a college degree), administrative, technician, clerical, or other similar types.

Federal Wage System (WG, WS, WL): Involves crafts, trades, and labor

Differences between the GS and WG positions:

1. They are established under different laws & are designed for different workforces.

GS positions are professional (require college degree), administrative, technical, clerical or other similar types. WG positions involve crafts, trades and labor.

The type of position you are seeking to fill dictates the format of the PD. Each system is designed for different workforce.

2. Grade is based upon differing percentages of major duties.

GS grade is based on substantial duties performed at least 25% of the time. WG is based on regular and recurring duties, regardless of percent of time involved, though classifiers usually look for 10% of duty hours performing the responsibilities.

3. Pay determinations differ.

GS salaries are generally nationwide in scope while WG/WS/WL are locally determined through wage surveys.

Developing & Writing PDs

Key Terms To Consider When Writing PDs

MAJOR DUTY - A primary duty that is the reason for the existence of the position; or the duty is sufficiently different from other major duties so as to require additional entrance qualifications or extensive post-assignment training.

TASK - A distinct, identifiable activity that constitutes one of the logical and necessary steps an employee performs in the position.

DUTY - A series of closely related tasks, usually performed in a given sequence, requiring the same, or closely-related, knowledge, skills, and abilities; responsibilities required by the position but not the primary reason(s) for the position's existence.

Exercise: Major Duty Case Study

Review the case study in Appendix A.

- Identify the major duty(ies)
- List the tasks that make up the duty(ies)

Developing & Writing PDs, cont'd.

Steps in Writing a PD

Per OPM, a position description must state the principal duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships of a position clearly and definitively to provide information necessary to its proper classification.

1. Determine tasks and responsibilities (duties) required in the position to meet mission needs.
2. Make logical outline of major duties (reason for position).
3. Assess position's relation to other positions.
4. Set supervisory chain of command.
5. Determine performance requirements (Knowledge, skill, ability, etc).

Developing & Writing PDs, cont'd.

Tips for Writing PDs

1. **Use active, expressive verbs to describe duties and responsibilities**, e.g., Manages, Performs, Directs, Develops, Writes, Creates, Recommends, etc.
2. **Say it in clear, picture-creating terms.** Instead of "processes mail," explain duties such as, "Sorts incoming mail, including packages and special messages. Selects and time-stamps designated mail items. Sorts mail into the designated mail slots. Picks up outgoing mail, checks for attachments and calls attention of sender to obvious discrepancies." Also, tell how often duty is performed, especially if it is incidental (e.g., once a month, as requested, etc.).
3. **Avoid clichés.** "Responsible for ensuring..." when the incumbent actually performs the duties. "Performs extremely complex and demanding duties" when the incumbent develops and analyzes reports to determine if the project is in compliance with NEPA or the Park Ranger patrols isolated areas in back country wooded lands.
4. **Avoid vague terms.** Instead of listing abilities/skills, explain such as: "Ability to apply basic arithmetic sufficient to make routine calculations of staff hours" or "Skill in applying basic data gathering methods, such as standard interviewing techniques, to collect various types of factual information relating to [job]."
5. **Don't write grade justifications (slant toward a grade).** Write the duties of the position without thought of the grade. That will come with classification.
6. **Avoid copying material** from a standard attempting to guarantee a grade. The desk audit may not substantiate the duties and the grade you want may not be found.
7. **Avoid ponderous phraseology.** "Serves in a unique position performing complex work in a professional manner." Show uniqueness and complexity.

Developing & Writing PDs, cont'd.

Formats for Writing PDs

<i>GS/WG Comparison of PDs</i>	
<u>GS in FES</u>	<u>WG/WL Form</u>
Introduction	Introduction
Major Duties	Job Summary
Factor 1	Skills & Knowledge
Factors 2-7	Responsibility
Factor 8	Physical Effort
Factor 9	Working Conditions

<i>Supervisory Comparison</i>	
<u>GS Supervisor</u>	<u>WG Supervisor</u>
1&2. Prog. Scope Effect & Org. Setting	1. Nature of Superv.
3. Supervision Given	2. Superv. Exercised
4-6. Contacts/Purpose, Work Difficulty, Other Conditions	3. Scope of Work Operations

General Schedule (GS)

PDs may be either narrative or factor format. It is determined by the format of the classification standard, but OPM is changing all formats to the factor evaluation system (FES) format as they update GS standards. It is recommended that all GS positions be written in FES format.

Factor Evaluation System (FES)

- I. Introduction or background information (sets the stage for the duties and describes where work will be performed, e.g. park setting)
- II. Major Duties (all regular and recurring duties that must be performed)
- III. Factors
 1. Knowledge Required by the Position
 2. Supervisory Controls (how the position will be supervised, e.g. chain of command and attention provided position)
 3. Guidelines (for the work)
 4. Complexity (of the work)
 5. Scope and Effect (of the work)
 6. Personal Contacts
 7. Purpose of Contacts
 8. Physical Demands
 9. Work Environment

Developing & Writing PDs, cont'd.

GS Supervisory Positions

You are strongly encouraged to write supervisory PDs in the regular FES format showing all the technical responsibilities for lower level supervisors and then adding the GSSG factor format. A PD is graded based upon the highest level of work performed whether technical or supervisory.

Same as the normal FES format except has 3 additional sections under Major Duties:

1. Supervisory Duties and Responsibilities (incumbent performs)
2. Equal Employment Opportunity Responsibilities
3. Safety Program Duties

and includes supervisory/managerial factors for positions supervising 25% of duty hours.

PLUS: Write factors in the following format.

1. Program Scope and Effect
2. Organizational Setting (reporting chain of command)
3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised (hire, fire, disciplinary action, leave approval, setting performance plans and giving performance appraisals, etc.)
4. Personal Contacts:
 - a. Nature of Contacts
 - b. Purpose of Contacts
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed
6. Other Conditions - as appropriate (Variety of work, shifts, fluctuating work force & constantly changing deadlines, dispersion, special staffing, specialized programs, and hazard/safety considerations)

Developing & Writing PDs, cont'd.

Federal Wage System (WG)

PD is a narrative with the following sections:

A. Introduction

1. Job Summary
2. Skill and Knowledge
3. Responsibility
4. Physical Effort
5. Working Conditions

Wage Grade Supervisors (WS)

Introduction:

Factor 1: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility

Factor 2. Level of Work Supervised

Factor 3. Scope of Work Operations Supervised

If this is a working supervisor, include duties and responsibilities of the position in separate paragraphs as if it was a WG position.

Alternatives to Writing Position Descriptions

1. Benchmark Position Descriptions: Generic PDs developed by subject-matter experts and classified at the WASO level. Requires classification certification by the WASO Chief of Classification, or equivalent, in block 21. These are valid PDs for use throughout DOI and the Bureaus. Incumbent must perform at least 80% of the duties in the PD.
2. Identical Additional PDs: These are PDs written generally for a park's use to fill several positions that perform the same type duties. They may only be used within the park where the original PD is classified. One park may not use another park's PD without reclassifying it.
3. Amendments to PDs: A supervisor may use a DI-625 form to amend a PD twice before the PD must be rewritten as a new PD. Each amendment must be certified by classifier as to its affect on the position.

Desk Audits

Desk Audit Procedures:

A desk audit is an in-depth review of the duties performed by an individual

- May be conducted on-site
- May be completed telephonically
- Requires updated PD with OF-8 signed by supervisor(s)

Employee should review current PD

- Make list of changes in duties
- Be prepared to explain duties and show examples of work

Human Resources Specialist will:

- Telephone Supervisor to inform date of audit and make appointment with incumbent
- Review related positions and supervisor PD
- Clarify duties with supervisor after audit, check to ensure nothing was missed

Classification Appeals

When an employee thinks his or her position is misclassified, he or she may appeal the classification; however, both GS and WG employees may only appeal title, series, and grade.

GS Procedure

Appeals may be sent to the Regional HR Office as point of first review, then to either NPS or DOI, and thirdly to OPM. GS employees have the option of appealing to any level within the appeal process the first time. OPM is the final authority and no further address is authorized.

Wage Grade Procedure

Again, the appeal may be sent to the Regional HR Office if the PD was classified by a park or other Servicing Personnel Office within the Region first. Wage Grade employees must appeal through the NPS channels or DOI first. They do not have the option of going directly to OPM.

References

Helpful Web Sites

Classification Standards: <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass>

Alaska Web Site: <http://165.83.62.205/ahr/classification/classify2.htm>

Forms: <http://www.nps.gov/renew/forms.htm>

Appeals: <http://www.opm.gov/classapp/main.asp>

Resource Careers Benchmarks: <http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/careers/>

FLERT (DOI Firefighter and Law Enforcement Retirement Team):
<http://flert.nifc.gov/>

Regulations

Position Descriptions:	5 CFR part 511 370 DM 511 5 USC Chapters 51 & 53 OPM Classification Standards
Pay Setting and Equity:	5 CFR parts 531, 532, 536 5 USC 53
Classification Appeals:	5 CFR part 511, Subpart F

To Receive Credit for this Course

1. PRINT your name on the attendance roster.
2. UPON RECEIPT OF E-MAIL NOTIFICATION, complete the online course evaluation.

For More Information Contact:

Floy Westermeier
Human Resources Specialist
Midwest Region
floy_westermeier@nps.gov
402-661-1652

Appendix A: Language for 6c Position Descriptions

The following sample language must be included within a non-benchmark PD if you are seeking 6c retirement coverage for the position. This is per FLERT.

1. Introduction:

NOTE: (for Supervisory PDs) Prior law enforcement experience, as gained by substantial service in a primary law enforcement position in the Federal government, or equivalent experience outside the Federal government, is a mandatory prerequisite/selective factor of this position. Candidates without this prior law enforcement experience do not qualify for this position.

(All PDs) Incumbent must be able to obtain and maintain a Type 1 Law Enforcement commission and meet the physical and medical qualification requirements for a law enforcement ranger. Uniformed position. Requires Background Investigation. Subject to drug testing.

2. Major Duties:

The requirement for possession of an NPS Type 1 Law Enforcement Commission must be contained in the duties section, along with the duties that require this commission;

3. Knowledge and Skills Required (Factor 1):

Knowledge of law enforcement and experience, as gained by substantial service in a primary law enforcement position in the Federal government, or equivalent experience outside the Federal government, *is mandatory*. A currently valid NPS Law Enforcement Commission must be maintained.

4. Guidelines:

Principal guidelines for this position are found in Federal statutes, laws and regulations, judicial regulatory proceedings, case law, Federal Code for Criminal Procedures, applicable State policies.

6. Complexity:

The work involves a variety of broad and diverse duties to develop and implement technical investigative and law enforcement programs and policies, provide law enforcement training, maintain employee records and participate in criminal investigations. Investigations typically involve other agencies and/or jurisdictions, as well as private organizations and, businesses that require coordination to avoid/resolve conflict and jurisdictional dispute. Investigations and other law enforcement activities may involve individuals and/or organizations that are well known and politically influential.

7. Scope and Effect:

The purpose of this position is two-fold: 1) to serve as the resident expert for conducting criminal investigations and protecting NPS' responsibilities/ rights; and 2) to investigate known or suspected violations of Federal laws and regulations and to provide coordination, logistical support, communications and NPS expertise statutes, laws and regulations, judicial regulatory proceedings, case law, Federal Code for Criminal procedures, applicable state policies and operating budget constraints.

8. Contacts and Purpose of Contacts:

Contacts are with ... law enforcement personnel from other Federal and international law enforcement agencies; state, foreign country, and city law enforcement administrators and their field officers; the U. S. Attorney, U.S. Department of Interior Solicitor, State Attorney General, and District Attorneys and their staff; judges and court personnel; witnesses, informant, operatives and suspects, and the public at large.

Investigative contacts are for the purpose of developing information, evidence patterns and sources, apprehensions, arrests, and detainments. Contacts are to detain, control, or interrogate suspected violators of resource and related laws. Suspects (and some informants) are sometimes convicted felons and frequently are fearful, uncooperative, evasive, uncommunicative, hostile, or dangerous.

6. Physical Demands:

Position is required to meet and continuously maintain the physical/medical standards as set forth in the requirements by D.O. #57.

Appendix B: Major Duty Case Study

The incumbent has occupied this position for 9 years and has performed a variety of duties related to the current work over the years. The following focuses on the current duties of the position. It is expected that these duties will remain as described for some time.

The incumbent says his primary duties include the collection, conservation, and restoration of artifacts and the research of the history of the Historic Site.

More specifically, he acquires artifacts; catalogs and inventories artifacts; maintains a system for indexing and cross-referencing fields for the collection; and updates historical property catalog cards, property jacket donor files, and reports. This responsibility requires knowledge of collection techniques and procedures including identifying and cataloguing artifacts. He conducts research for the Historic Site throughout history that serves as a reference source for exhibits, for expansion of the collection, and for individuals engaged in historical research. In this regard, he prepares brief bibliographic data, summarizes extracts and studies, conducts personal interviews, and relates objects to record. To research, the incumbent indicates he must have an extensive knowledge of the history of the Historic Site, the president's family in general, American History, and other related subjects to establish historical information.

He performs limited conservation/restoration of artifacts when necessary; maintains environmental controls to preserve the artifacts; and monitors the collection for conservation problems. For example, clothing is restored using a special tape to prevent additional tears, artifacts are wrapped to preserve the conditions and prevent overexposure to ultraviolet rays, and temperature and humidity are adjusted to known standards to conserve exhibits. He must have knowledge of conservation and preservation methods to prevent damage to artifacts. The incumbent claims he is responsible for valuable and rare collection material.

The incumbent states that accuracy and carefulness is of utmost importance. He pointed out that he cannot make errors in his research or label exhibits

incorrectly since this action would misinform those individuals visiting the homes.

The incumbent indicates he also assists his supervisor in the development of military history collections, policies, the historic site master plan, training plans, exhibit plans, and story line plans. He develops and maintains applicable regulations and files and assists in the preparation of the budget including forecasting requirements for temporary assignments, travel, exhibit materials, and contracts for construction and services, e.g., air conditioning system, security and fire systems, lighting, exhibits, supplies, etc. He composes tour information and conducts guided tours and orientations for individuals and groups including trainees, students, visitors and their families, as well as various civic and educational groups. He must have good speaking abilities to relay historical information during tours and to respond to numerous inquiries. Also, he claims he must have good written communications skills to prepare bibliographies and scripts and to document historical information.

During an average week, 1,000 individuals visit the Historic Site. That number may run as high as 5,000, especially during the summer months. The Historic Site operates on a 10-day basis, 12 months out of the year. The Site employs 10 individuals to maintain the homes. Five or six temporary employees are added during peak times to assist with the heavy workload.

The incumbent receives directions from the Site Curator. The Curator provides overall objectives when making assignments and advises the incumbent on changes in policies and precedents. The incumbent then independently plans and carries out assignments resolving problems as they occur within established methods, procedures, oral and written instructions, and Site practices and regulations. However, unusual problems, controversial issues, or questions of policy are referred to the supervisory. Completed work is evaluated in terms of effectiveness of results and compliance and adherence to local policy, regulations and procedures.